

Revelation Chapter 5

1) The Redeeming Lamb (5:1-14)

a) Introduction to Chapter 5

i) In Chapter 4 the power of God as eternal creator is shown, and his power is far greater than that of Domitian or any earthly ruler.

(1) The song of praise in Chapter 4 features worship to God as creator.

ii) In Chapter 5 the love of God as Redeemer will be shown.

(1) The song of praise in Chapter 5 features worship to Christ as redeemer.

iii) In Chapter 5 the throne is still at the center of the vision, and the seven spirits, four living creatures, and twenty-four elders are still present.

b) Rev. 5:1-5 **1** Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. **2** And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” **3** And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, **4** and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. **5** And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

i) A scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals

(1) Ordinarily, papyrus scrolls are written on one side only, but this scroll was unusual. The fact that it is written on both sides suggests importance, completeness of the message.

(2) Seven seals indicates completeness, either of the message or that it was completely sealed, so that no one could know what was inside.

(3) The message is to be revealed by opening the seals one at a time, beginning in Chapter 6.

(4) Some have called it a book of “destiny”, indicating what was going to happen to Christians.

(5) It also serves to introduce the central character of Chapter 5 – the lamb who was slain.

ii) A mighty angel poses the question “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?”

- (1) The one who opened a seal took responsibility for the contents, so it had to be someone morally fit.
- iii) There may have been a pause, a silence, before John understood that no one at all, in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth could be found.
- iv) John must have realized the importance of the scroll, for he wept loudly. To leave it unopened meant that no one would know what was going to happen to Christians.
- v) One of the twenty-four elders stopped his weeping by telling him that one was worthy.
- (1) The Lion of the Tribe of Judah (v. 5)
- (a) Genesis 49:8-12 - The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. (ESV)
- (b) Genesis 49:8-12 - The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his. (NIV)
- (c) Genesis 49:8-12 - The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*. (KJV)
- (d) Genesis 49:8-12 - The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come. And the obedience of the peoples to him" (NKJV)
- (e) The word Shiloh in Genesis 49:10 is somewhat obscure. The word *Shiloh* appears 33 times in the Old Testament and all but one usage refer to an area of Palestine. That one usage is in Genesis 49:10, a reference to the Messiah.
- (f) When Shiloh—the Messiah—came, the scepter of rule over Israel departed from Judah and rested in the hand of the King of Kings, where it remains today, although many still reject Him. He is the Lawgiver at whose feet we now sit for teaching in truth and righteousness through His Word, the Bible. The “obedience of the peoples” was and still is offered to Him, replacing obedience to the law of Moses.

(g) The Lion is the greatest of animals, and the one who would come from Jacob's 4th son is the greatest One who would ever come from the tribe of Judah.

(2) The Root of David

(a) Isaiah 11:1-5 - There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.

(b) Acts 2:29-35 - [29](#) "Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. [30](#) Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, [31](#) he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

c) Rev. 5:6-10 [6](#) And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. [7](#) And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. [8](#) And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. [9](#) And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, [10](#) and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."



THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN (5:6)



THE LAMB IS WORTHY TO OPEN THE SCROLL (5:7-10)

i)

- ii) As though it had been slain
 - (1) 5:9 and 5:12 are definite - it *had* been slain
 - (2) ἐσφαγμένον (esphagmenon) – slay, slaughter, especially of victims for sacrifice
- iii) Seven horns and seven eyes
 - (1) The seven Spirits of God (5:6)
 - (a) Sent out into all the earth
 - (i) John 16:13 - When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, ...
 - (ii) Mark 16:15-16 - “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.
 - (iii) 1 Cor. 2:10-13 - these things God has revealed to us (the apostles) through the Spirit ... we (the apostles) impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit
 - (2) The lamb may appear to be helpless and harmless, but the seven horns indicate complete power, omnipotence, and the seven eyes indicate complete knowledge, omniscience, as well as having been identified as the seven spirits of God.
- iv) And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. (5:7)
 - (1) He has been deemed worthy to open the seals because he has conquered (5:5).
 - (a) Just as he has exhorted Christians to conquer (Rev. 2:7, 11, 3:12, 26)
- v) And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. (5:8)
 - (1) Now that the lamb has taken the scroll with the seven seals, praise and adoration are given to him, even before he opens the seals.
 - (2) Some have suggested that the harps in heaven are a justification for using instrumental music in the worship of the church.
 - (a) This would require a literal translation.
 - (b) If harps are literal, then the golden bowls full of incense should also be literal.
 - (i) The odor of the burning incense in the golden bowls is symbolic of the prayers of the saints.

- (ii) The harps are symbolic of praise.
- (c) The praise in 5:9 begins with the singing of a new song – they *sang*.
- vi) And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation
- (1) Isaiah 42 speaks about a new song in conjunction with a promise of the Messiah.
 - (a) Is. 42:1 - Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.
 - (b) Is. 42:10 - Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the end of the earth, ...
- (2) The Lamb is worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, because:
 - (a) You were slain
 - (b) By your blood you ransomed people for God
 - (i) Every tribe and language and people and nation
 1. Used to speak of all humanity in Revelation
 - a. Rev. 7:9 – behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, ...
 - b. Rev. 11:9 – For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb
 - c. Rev. 13:7-8 – authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation
 - d. Rev. 14:6 - with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people
 2. Four terms are used, and some have made the following observations of the all-inclusiveness of the four
 - a. Tribe – every family group
 - b. Language – every linguistic group
 - c. People – every social group
 - d. Nation – every ethnic group

vii) and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth.

(1) The results of redemption

(i) You have made them a kingdom

1. Past tense
2. Col. 1:13-14 - He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son

(ii) And priests to our God

1. 1 Pet. 2:9 - But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
2. All Christians are priests
 - a. 1 Pet. 2:5 - you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
 - i. Christian sacrifices are spiritual rather than animal.
 - b. Rom. 12:1 - present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship
 - c. Heb. 9:23-28 - he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

(iii) They shall reign upon the earth.

1. As a conqueror reigns,
2. Rom. 5:17 - much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.
3. Rom. 5:21 - grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

viii) Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,

(1) To the heavenly scene angels are added, joining in praise to the Lamb.

(a) Myriads can mean 10,000, and some translations render it as 10,000 times 10,000.

(i) Rather than taking this as literal, it should be understood that all the angels joined in praise.

(ii) Whether angels sing or not has been debated by some.

(iii) Singing and speaking are used synonymously.

1. Eph. 5:19 - addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,

2. Rev. 5:9a - And they sang a new song, saying,

3. Even though there is a distinction between speak and sing in Greek, singing required words, which carry thoughts.

4. Also worth noting is that singing then was not like singing now.

a. There was no meter, no rhyme, and very little change in pitch.

b. We would call it a chant, and Psalms were often chanted in singing.

ix) saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”

(1) The worthiness of the Lamb is expressed in seven ways.

(a) Power (δύναμιν) – the ability to perform

(b) Wealth (πλοῦτον) – riches of every kind

(c) Wisdom (σοφίαν) - wisdom, insight, skill (human or divine), intelligence

(d) Might (ἰσχὺν) - force to overcome resistance; strength

(i) Might is power in action; it is possible to have power without using it, but the Lamb used the power given him.

(e) Honor (τιμὴν) - the *value (weight, honor) willingly assigned* to something.

(f) Glory (δόξαν) - honor, renown; glory, an especially divine quality, the unspoken manifestation of God, splendor

(g) Blessing (εὐλογία) - adulation, praise, blessing; the word from which we get eulogy – to speak well of someone.

- (2) Seven may be taken to indicate Jesus' perfection or completeness
- x) And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"
- (1) Everything everywhere joined in praise of God (him who sits on the throne) and Jesus (the Lamb)
- (2) Four of the seven qualities from the previous verse are mentioned here, but, in Greek, the definite article "the" precedes each of the four, suggesting that only God and Jesus deserve such praise.
- (3) Forever and ever (αἰῶνας) is literally eon upon eon, probably to be understood as being without end or limit.
- xi) And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.
- (1) The four living creatures were introduced in Rev. 4:6-8, representing God's dominion over all creation.
- (2) They were saying (or kept saying) "Amen", over and over.
- (a) Amen (Ἀμήν) - verily, truly, amen, so let it be; emphasizing the importance of what has been said.
- (3) The elders had fallen down and worshipped in Rev. 4:10 and 5:8.
- (a) The twenty-four elders (Rev. 4:4) probably represent the redeemed people of God from every age
- (b) Worshipped (προσεκύνησαν) - to kiss the ground when prostrating before a superior; to *worship*, ready "to fall down/prostrate oneself to adore on one's knees".
- (c) Should the elders of this (or any) congregation physically fall down to worship?